Vienna, January 16, 1937.

My dear Judge Moore:

I received in due course your letters of November 23 and of December 10, 19, and 23, acknowledging my recent letters to you. I appreciate very much indeed your telling me that you find them interesting and helpful. I have noted with particular interest and pleasure that you have been sending these letters to the President and I would be very happy indeed to think that the information which I am able to give from this really excellent observation post, or the observations which I am able to make out of my long and rather continuous study of developments in Europe, may be of some interest to him and to you as background.

I wrote you last on December 5 and 22, and have refrained in the meantime from writing you as my despatches have been giving the necessary information concerning routine developments in Austria where it has remained unusually quiet within the country. The Austrians take their Christmas and New Year’s holidays very seriously and most of the members of the Government, with the exception of the Chancellor, took the opportunity to go into the country to enjoy the sunshine and the snow in the mountains.

Since I last wrote you Europe has passed through a major crisis the importance of which a certain part of the European press is now endeavoring to minimize, but I think it would be dangerous and exceedingly unwise not to recognize that the danger of war by provocative action by Germany was imminent and not to draw the necessary and obvious conclusions and implications, and perhaps lessons for the future from the manner and under what circumstances the crisis was passed through without actual conflict.

The Honorable
E. Salton Score,
Acting Secretary of State
Washington, D. C.
The Austrian Government is continuously following very closely the developments in the general European situation. I find that the Chancellor is particularly well informed concerning developments in Germany, and apparently equally well informed concerning the European situation as a whole. He has to be, for while the center of interest and of danger which used to be definitely in Austria is now transferred elsewhere, the Government here is convinced that Germany remains the principal danger to peace in Europe and that if she provokes a European war she will take immediate action in the direction of Czechoslovakia and Austria with motorized divisions in the hope of maintaining at least some of the ground occupied, no matter what the final settlement of the conflict which she provoked might be. There is no question but that the Government here is convinced from the information which reaches it from so many sources that for several weeks just preceding Hitler's reassuring statement to the French Ambassador at the Berlin New Year's reception on January 11, there was great danger of Germany's taking action which would have provoked a general European war. I happen to know that the Chancellor and his most immediate advisers here were of the opinion that the internal and external situation of Germany was causing Hitler to seriously consider action in several directions which could only have provoked war, and that he was considering taking this action in spite of the contrary advice which was being given to him by the Army, Navy, Wilhelmstrasse, and by industrial circles.

The preoccupation of the Austrian Government was strikingly shown by an article which appeared in the Chancellor's newspaper NEUÖKREIS WELTBLATT, on Sunday, January 10, which strongly and categorically denounced those who were circulating the rumors that the accord of July 11, 1936 between Berlin and Vienna contained secret provisions among which was a military one providing for close cooperation between the Austrian and German Armies and their General Staffs. The article said that such an arrangement would mean nothing less than the abandonment of Austrian independence, and that once and for all such rumormongering concerning secret agreements must be categorically denied. Austria's foreign policy was based on complete independence and complete liberty of action in her foreign policy. As these rumors concerning
secret provisions in the accord, and especially concerning military cooperation between Austria and Germany, have been current ever since the accord was signed over six months ago, it was considered here by diplomatic observers most significant that such a categorical denial should appear at a time when the European situation was so tense and when the Austrian Government, as well as other Governments, seriously feared the provocation of conflict by Germany. I think this semi-official declaration of the Austrian Government is one of the clearest indications that there is not, as I have always said in my letters and despatches, any secret military or other agreement between Austria and Germany. Austria would not have said on the eve of a struggle which she believed imminent that she did not have an engagement which she might be called upon to keep the next day on the outbreak of hostilities.

Diplomatic observers here consider this semi-official statement of the Austrian Government more significant than even the accord of July 11, as it clearly shows that Austria intends to maintain her independence and a neutral position if at all possible should a conflict arise. That she cannot maintain a neutral position in case of conflict is fairly obvious, but the British, French, and Italian Ministers here, as well as the representatives of the Central and Southeastern European States, have given the greatest importance to this Austrian declaration. Perhaps it was intended to carry its message to Berlin as well as to other capitals, and perhaps it was one of the many indications which Hitler had which restrained him from the provocative action which he was so undoubtedly contemplating and the announcement of the abandonment of which was made through his reassuring statement to the French Ambassador at the New Year's reception in Berlin.

Now that this crisis is safely over, there is this general effort to make it appear that it did not exist. I believe there is no question whatever but that Europe passed through this major crisis during the last two weeks of December and early in January, and that the danger of war was imminent as a result of provocative action by Germany. I have felt, as you know, that war would not come, but I have continuously emphasised that these dangerous elements in the European situation are not yet eliminated and now
that this crisis is over I believe that succeeding ones may be similarly safely passed through, but it would be dangerous not to recognize that the disturbing factors are still present and that further crises are in the offing. In my letter of December 22 I referred to the increasingly serious internal situation in Germany and the knowledge of the regime that its hold on the country was getting weaker. In the meantime the external position was developing everywhere against the regime and all the influences were to impel Hitler and his radical advisers to provoke a conflict while there was yet some chance for it to succeed. I was confident all along that actual war would not come through this crisis, but that it existed we must recognize, and I think it cannot be emphasized too much how dangerous it is to make it appear that it did not exist, as some are trying to do now. To recognize that it did exist, and to realize how actual war was averted, is important as a guide to what sort of action is necessary to face successfully these further crises in the German situation which are bound to arise before the situation is cleared up.

There seems to be no question that Hitler's direct representative in Spain told him that the actual sending of Reichswahr troops in adequate numbers was necessary to assure a Franco and a German victory. There seems to be well substantiated and adequate evidence to show that Hitler sent for General Fritsch, who told him that any sending of Reichswahr troops in such numbers could not be concealed and would cause an open break with England and France. Politically the sending of troops was impossible, Fritsch said, for it would provoke a war for which Germany was not prepared. He is said to have used the words to Hitler that "You cannot commence a war with bread cards". The most significant thing about the whole matter is that the Reichswahr, for the first time, refused to take action or to acquiesce in action requested or proposed by Hitler, but made its direct opposition known. This is a new development in the German picture which is of primary importance.

I think, too, it is quite definitely established that towards the end of December, having been thwarted in the sending of troops, Hitler sent for Admiral Förster and asked him to send four additional cruisers into Spanish waters and
to carry on a poorly concealed guerilla warfare against shipping to Spanish ports. Förster told Hitler, as Fritsch had done, that first of all such action was impossible politically as it would provoke war with France and England and that further, from a naval point of view it was not feasible as the Navy was not prepared to maintain so many ships away from base. As a result Fürster had to resign, but his successor was not given the orders which Hitler had intended to impose on Förster.

In a letter dated December 30, 1936, to Dunn I gave him some information about General von Seeckt, who, as you know, died towards the end of December. I don't know whether you had time to read this letter, but I may say that von Seeckt was a very good friend of mine for whom I had great admiration and further information which I have received since I wrote to Dunn confirms that Hitler sent for von Seeckt several weeks before the latter’s death in December, and used all his persuasive powers to get him to use his influence with the more influential Generals to convince them that if Germany had to take action which would involve her with Russia, the Army must give up its reservations with regard to action against that country. This interview, together with information which von Seeckt was getting from his friends, showed him the seriousness of the situation and of the danger becoming acute of Germany’s becoming involved in another war which I happen to know he considered could lead only to a second disaster. Such a second disaster von Seeckt always said to me must at all costs be avoided. There seems to be little doubt that the inner disturbance which the possibility of this eventuality caused resulted in von Seeckt's death from a heart attack. I have information from first hand sources showing that the sons of friends of mine who occupy high positions in Germany and who are in a position to know what is brewing within the Government, have recently been leaving Germany with the knowledge and consent of their parents who do not wish their children to become involved in a disastrous war. You have, I am sure, ample information reaching you from many sources showing you that under pressure of the internal and external situation Germany was considering provoking a crisis, but the foregoing may add some interesting background.
Germany's actually provoking a crisis was avoided by various factors too numerous to go into here, but the most significant of which was this action of the Army and Navy which showed clearly to Hitler that he could not go ahead. At the same time the determined attitude of England and France and their clear solidarity had their effect. Even though the actual orders may not have been given to the British and French fleets, which the press reported, it is obvious that such orders were contemplated and the intimations to Berlin had their effect. Although Italy is continuing to play her dog in the manger policy and undoubtedly will continue to do so, only under greater difficulties and with greater reserve than in the past, there is reason to believe that Italy did not fail to let Berlin know that it considered a more reasonable attitude with respect to Spain essential. The parallelism of action between Rome and Berlin continues, but Mussolini rests under no misapprehensions as to where England and France would stand in case of German action in Spain or Morocco, or in any other direction for the present. He does not want to be faced by any decisions such as that which provocative action by Hitler would make necessary. Italy undoubtedly therefore exercised a moderating influence in Berlin. As I have also pointed out, Mussolini believes that Hitler rests under dangerous misapprehensions as to what the action of certain countries, particularly of France, would be in certain eventualities, and as Mussolini does not want war there is every reason to believe that he will continue to exorcise a certain moderating influence in Berlin. On the other hand, in spite of the gentlemen's agreement between London and Rome, it cannot be left out of account that Italy remains a dictatorship and that in dictatorships policy is opportunistic and in no sense continuous, and therefore dangerous.

The internal situation in Germany is unquestionably growing worse. There is much interesting information in this connection that I could give you, but with which I must not burden this letter. There are signs which some would be inclined to ignore which are significant. One must read real significance into the final forcing out of Dr. Goerdeler, the Mayor of Leipzig, from his post as price controller, in the nomination of Lippert as Burgermaster of Berlin, and in the separation of Paul Scheffer as editor of the BERLINER TAGBLATT. In the desperate struggle to maintain their position the hold of the radicals on the regime must be tightened. I am told,
by the way, that it is believed that Scheffer is to go to Washington for the TAGEBLATT, where his wife has been living, as you probably know, for some years. While Scheffer is not a Nazi, I do not consider him a man to be trusted and I view his possible going to Washington with some concern, for he is plausible and clever, but has shown that he can be a willing instrument of the present regime and do things which a decent man will not do.

Everything seems to point to the internal and external situation of Germany during the present year bringing about a series of crises such as the one which has unquestionably just been passed through without explosion. Hitler chose his conversation with François-Poncet at the New Year's reception as the graceful way out this time, but behind this action there is a wealth of background which must be remembered, principally the, for the first time, positive action of the Army and Navy; the unquestioned and clear solidarity of England and France over Spain and Morocco which they made known at the Wilhelmsstrasse; the steps taken by Switzerland to protect her frontier; the declaration by Austria that she was pursuing an independent course and that her Army was in no sense dependent on that of Germany; and what seems to be the unquestionable moderating influence exercised by Rome in Berlin.

In addition to the foregoing, of course, is the increasing recognition by Hitler and his associates of the impossibility of making a war now in spite of how much they may be pressed to do so now. These crises are going to continue to come and I think we must remember that the internal situation in Germany is not going to get any better for the regime and, to put it brutally for one must face these things frankly, it is best for Europe that for the present things should get worse in Germany rather than better. It cannot go better in Germany until it has gone worse and things have come to a head. The difficulties of the regime are going to increase in every direction - foodstuffs, raw materials, difficulties with rearmament, discontent among the people, and greater rift between the Army and Navy and the Party.
The manoeuvres which Germany has made to disrupt the general European situation have failed and English-French solidarity has only been strengthened. Germany's ability to count on Italy is less certain than ever, as a result of the gentlemen's agreement between London and Rome. Kemal Pascha, effective as he may be in some ways, is after all a dictator who is intoxicated a good deal of the time and he, too, has failed in his effort to use the disturbed situation created by Berlin to his advantage - and this through the firm attitude of France and England. The real effects of united and determined action are being felt not only in Berlin, but in Rome and elsewhere.

All this is encouraging and the fact that it has been possible to get over this last real crisis without war is most significant, but it cannot lead to too great optimism or to any change of policy for the present. The situation is going to force the present Government in Germany to seek compromises. Without having given up any of their objectives, for they cannot give them up, they are going to show themselves more prepared to apparently give up some of these objectives for it is now a question as to whether the regime will be able to maintain itself. The European, as well as the German situation, is entering in many respects into a final and decisive phase. We are going to see the present Government in Germany endeavoring to make every and frantic efforts to save themselves. It realizes its waning power over the people within the country as well as its decreasing power to carry through any fait accompli outside of Germany without war, which it cannot provoke without certain disaster. The promises and compromises which it will increasingly be prepared to make are just as illusory as ever, but in the disturbed state of Europe these promises and the alluring statements which we may expect will have a certain influence, for Europe wants to avoid war and there are many people over here still, including some thinking ones, who do not realize that war is inevitable if the present Government remains in power in Berlin.

There is every reason to believe that Mussolini arrived at the gentlemen's agreement with London at least three or four months ahead of schedule, not because he wished to advance the date, but because it was forced on him by
developments. Mussolini is under no illusions with regard to the objectives of Berlin or with regard to Hitler. He was willing to play with Berlin and use this parallelism of action with Berlin as blackmail on London and Paris. It proved safe and successful until he realized that Hitler was on the point, in November and December, of provoking a war in which he would have at once to take sides, and through which war, no matter who won, Italy would lose, to say nothing of what it would mean for him. It was in order to avoid this catastrophe for himself and Italy that he had to make the agreement with England which he always had in mind, much sooner than he intended, and with sacrifices that he hoped to avoid through further blackmail. But this does not mean that Germany is going to give up her efforts with Italy or that Italy can be depended on to maintain a really constructive policy. The situation in Berlin and in Rome remains fundamentally the same for the policy of dictatorships must be opportunistic.

If these efforts which Berlin is going to make to ingratiate itself are going to result in a lessening of the pressure on Germany as long as the present regime remains in power, then the danger of war will be increased rather than lessened. The final result may not be changed, but the agony of Europe and disorder in the world will be prolonged. Goering has already gone to Rome for the purpose of building up the German fences there and to put what obstacles he can in the way of the Italian-French agreement which is in the process of formulation to supplement the London-Rome gentlemen’s agreement. Berlin is going to use Schacht and all the moderates to put up the best possible front, and Europe in its desire for peace must not make itself any illusions but must keep all of the sheer realities in mind and not allow itself to be misled by these frantic efforts of the Berlin Government to maintain itself.

Germany will endeavor to get economic arrangements without political concessions and the attack will continue to be directed mainly on France. The pressure must be maintained until the present Government is forced out and in this respect the recent action of the German Army and Navy is most encouraging and you will note is along the lines that I have indicated in my letters it would be. They have been supporting the regime, and will continue to do so, as long as it is
the legal Government in Germany and there is a possibility of its success. They will not, however, support the regime in a military adventure in any direction which they know would be a disaster. Whatever convulsion may come as a result of the change of government in Germany is increasingly likely to be a short and internal one, and bring about the establishment of a responsible government with which these arrangements — which the present government is now showing a willingness to make — can be made with safety. It is no time, in my opinion, for any change of policy by England or France, or by us. If they wish to maintain peace they must remain absolutely firm until there is a good government in Berlin. There is the possibility to be feared that there will be wavering in Paris as well as in London, and it is here I think that we can play a constructive role without necessarily undertaking any direct action. If there is wavering and uncertainty in Paris and in London and they endeavor to draw us into economic arrangements which are so thoroughly illusory, we can help the situation by refusing to take any part therein and that, I think, will be sufficient to stiffen their attitude. This, I am convinced too, is the only safe policy for us, for we cannot look forward to anything like normal economic relations with Germany until there is a complete change, and an assured and permanent change, of policy there.

These crises in the German situation will continue to come during this year. I believe they can be met just as successfully as this last one has been met by the same methods. If they are so met, I am confident that we now have good reason to believe that before the end of the year the danger of war in Europe will be definitely out of the way and the equally painful process of economic reconstruction in Germany and in Europe can start. It is dangerous to fix dates, and I was one of those who believed that the regime in Germany could not hold out as long as it has. I do believe, however, that now we can begin to see the end even though we cannot yet tell how long the agony may yet last.

The situation within Austria is developing quite satisfactorily and does not give any cause for immediate concern. An intimate friend of the Chancellor told me that he is contemplating marrying about six months hence and his
prospective fiancée is a Countess Rugger, who was born a Countess Czernin and whose marriage has recently been annulled, I am informed, by the Vatican at the Chancellor's desire. She is a very charming, attractive woman of under thirty, with four very young children, so that if the marriage does come off in due course, which now seems quite probable, the Chancellor with his own son will have quite a family. There are those who view the Chancellor's proposed marriage with certain misgivings. He is a very devout Catholic and very much in favor in Catholic circles, but he will nevertheless be subjected to a good deal of criticism even though the marriage is to a good Catholic whose former marriage tie has been annulled by the Vatican. It will give non-Catholic circles, which are already passively if not actively opposed to the Chancellor, an opportunity to undermine the Chancellor's position, and even in Catholic circles which in Austria are particularly narrow, it will not help him. My own feeling, however, is that the way things are developing in Austria the Chancellor's marriage will not disturb his position, which in my opinion is becoming continuously and increasingly stronger.

Perhaps you may be good enough to tell the President on a convenient opportunity that on the occasion of the New Year's reception here to the diplomatic corps President Miklas, who is a very fine old gentleman and who has frequently expressed to me his admiration of President Roosevelt and of his courage and vision, asked me to convey to the President his best wishes for his personal welfare. I said that I would be very glad to do this and assured him at the same time of how cordially I was confident these personal good wishes were reciprocated by the President. President Miklas, with a very pleasant smile that he has, remarked that he considered that President Roosevelt could and ought to be proud of his achievement in having brought twenty-one sovereign, independent states around the conference table and being able to get them to agree on anything. He said that to get twenty-one states to such unanimous agreement, no matter what the subject of the agreement might be, was something unique and of which the President should be proud.

The friendly attitude of President Miklas towards our country is characteristic of that of, I believe, all of the higher officials of the Austrian Government. As we are
planning to return home for at least a brief stay towards
the beginning of April if the situation over here permits
my doing so, my wife and I are doing a good deal of official
entertaining these days. This official entertaining in
Vienna is apt to be rather dull, but you will be interested
to know that after I had arranged with the President's secre­
tary that he should come to dinner with us on Friday, Jan­
uary 22, the President later asked that this date be changed.
The President remarked when the date was laid before him
that Friday, January 22, was for him a fast day and that he
wished the date to be changed to Thursday, the 21st as he
"always enjoyed his dinner" at the home of the American Min­
ister. Last year when he was at our house for dinner and
had stayed much longer than is usual here in Vienna, when
he left he said, with his smile, to his "Chef du Cabinet"
who happened to be the present Secretary of State for For­
eign Affairs, "What did I do wrong tonight?" Dr. Schmidt
replied, "You come too early, Mr. President, and you are
leaving too late." The Secretary of State for Foreign
Affairs was our guest at a dinner this last Tuesday night
and, what is most extraordinary here in Vienna, remained
until three in the morning apparently thoroughly enjoying
a game of bridge. We try to make our official entertain­
ing here a little bit different and a bit less boring than
these formal affairs usually are in Vienna — for it is strange
how much the formalism of the old Court still weighs on
certain aspects of official life here.

The conversations for a trade agreement between
Germany and Austria to which I referred in my letter of
December 22, have started again and are still in progress.
The Austrian attitude remains, as I sketched it in my let­
ter of December 22, and I believe that the present conver­
sations will continue for several weeks and will then again
be interrupted, for no agreement such as that which Germany
desires is, I believe, possible. Although the situation
generally in Austria has been very quiet the past three weeks,
I have been more than busy through the efforts which I have
made to stop the various things which the Germans were trying
to persuade the Austrians to do which would have seriously
interfered with our own trade with Austria and later with the
possibility for the Austrians to make a trade agreement with
us. I have reason to believe that our efforts have been quite
successful.
I wrote a letter, I believe on December 22, to Dunn giving some information with regard to the Duke of Windsor who, as you know, is living some thirty-five kilometers from Vienna. He continues to conduct himself with the greatest circumspection and is certainly not giving the slightest cause for any adverse criticism. He came in yesterday and called informally on President Miklas. He has been visiting the museums and some manufacturing establishments in Vienna and so far as I know has not been in a single night club, which he used to frequent during his visits to Vienna as Prince of Wales and King. I have had one very interesting conversation with him and will see him again on the 20th at a small gathering, and again in a few days afterwards. He does not intend to go out very much, but is slowly preparing the way to live the life of a country gentleman. I have the impression that he will stay at Enzesfeld until after Mrs. Simpson’s divorce is made absolute, and that she will then come here and the marriage will take place here. There is of course a possibility of a change in his plans, but these are undoubtedly his plans for the present, which his friends are endeavoring to have him hold to. What is more extraordinary is that his whole life seems to be more normal and in many ways less subject to criticism as a country gentleman at Enzesfeld than more latterly as King. I have been very much annoyed at an erroneous press despatch of the AP, which appeared in the NEW YORK TIMES, and I understand in other papers at home, to the effect that on Christmas Day the Duke invited us to lunch and that we did not accept. The article was so worded as though my wife and I had deliberately refused the invitation and it left all sorts of implications. There was nothing like this at all, and as a matter of fact he did ask us to go to the British Legation after the church service, which we did very gladly, and had a pleasant and interesting chat with him.

I am hoping that the long voyage from Buenos Aires home may have given the Secretary ample time to rest after what must have been a rather strenuous experience, and I am sure that you are all very glad to have him back in Washington. Please give him my very good wishes on his return.

With all good wishes,

Cordially and faithfully yours,

George S. Messrs. Smith.
Over the week-end I have learned from a source I have in the past found reliable, interesting background concerning Goering’s visit to Rome. In my letters to Mr. Phillips and to the Secretary in the past I have mentioned an Austrian named Hueber, who is the brother-in-law of Goering and who is at present living in this country, and who maintains very close contact with Goering. Hueber has just returned from Berlin where he was with his brother-in-law Goering immediately preceding the departure for Rome.

Hueber told my informant that Goering considers the internal and external situation of Germany hopeless unless fundamental changes are made. He is therefore proposing to Mussolini that Hitler should be kicked upstairs into the Presidency and that he, Goering, take over the real job of governing the country, with Reichswehr support and with a completely changed program which would involve dropping the Party and the radical leaders and a good part of the Party program including also a let up on anti-Semitism, the Churches, and autarchy. Goering wants to sound out Mussolini as to how he would view this change. Hueber says that it was Goering and his friends who originally brought about the Italian-German rapprochement and who made the accord of July 11, 1936 with Austria possible, both against Hitler’s opposition. Now the position is worse than ever for Germany and Hueber says Goering sees the only way out through this kicking of Hitler upstairs, getting rid of the radical elements, and a complete change of program. The press has recently carried items that it is being contemplated making Hitler President and Goering Chancellor, but German papers have carried denials. That there is something of this kind in the air is, in my opinion, clear. Whether it can be viewed with satisfaction I am not so certain.

There is no question but that Goering is the most moderate and in many ways the best of the present regime, but he is full of resentments and is basically not intelligent. He can be reasonable. Together with the Army he is undoubtedly in a position to force Hitler upstairs and to bring about any change of policy he sees fit. With Goering in control the
situation would unquestionably be better than the one prevailing now, but it would not be a desirable one for it would necessarily make foreign cooperation, which is so essential for Germany, slower and more difficult, for it would have to be so much more careful.

It may be that such an interim arrangement as Goering seems to have in mind is the one which must be faced. The Goering-Reichswehr relations are on the whole good. Reichswehr control and moderate control from finance and industry would be greater with Goering as Chancellor than with Hitler. Goering has never been an enthusiastic National Socialist. Like with the Army, the Party was for him a means to an end. He would not be compromising with any principles of his own in letting a good part of the Party program drop, but we must remember that with Goering as Chancellor, even with Goebbels and the other radicals out of the way, a considerable part of the totalitarian state practice will remain, and that leaves Germany a dangerous element in Europe. The danger of war for the present would be perhaps definitely out of the way, but the seed of a future one would be there. Goering is full of resentments over the last war and he himself would never be satisfied until Germany has won a decisive victory over England and France. My own personal contact with him and knowing his real attitude convinces me of this. But he is prepared to wait longer and to bide his time for he thinks he is young and that the objective is more sure if there is no precipitation.

Just why Goering should wish to talk over this with Mussolini I am not so clear, but the information which I have secured through this source in the past has been so accurate that I just wanted to add these few words to tell you that behind all the rest of what Goering may be discussing in Rome there appears unquestionably to be this plan of his assuming the Chancellorship, with Hitler kicked upstairs. I have only one definite observation to make now, and that is that if Goering and the Reichswehr are in agreement on this, which is not at all improbable, they can do it without any real convulsion in Germany any day they see fit. And if the Reichswehr sees in this any real alleviation for the German situation it would certainly prefer Goering as Chancellor to Hitler whom, like an old glove, they are increasingly prepared to cast away even though for the present he might have to be retained as a figurehead.